

FAITH, HOPE, AND GLORY
Growing Strong in Faith for God's Glory

Romans Series
PBC 2025

Text: Romans 4:18-25

In Romans 4, Paul encourages us to see “Justification by Faith” not just as a doctrine we must believe, but ***as a reality we personally experience!***

To help us understand what experiencing justification by faith looks like, ***Paul points to three powerful, life-giving realities that are ours because our faith has resulted in God justifying us in His sight!***

1. ***4:1-12*** – Justification by faith should produce ***unquenchable, satisfying joy*** in us because we have received the ***blessing of a righteousness*** that will never be marred, stained, or depleted by any temptation that overtakes us, failure that discourages us, or sin that defeats us. (Psalm 32:1-3,11; Numbers 6:22-27)
2. ***4:13-17*** – Justification by Faith should give us ***unshakeable, sustaining hope*** because we have received ***a promise from God*** by which He makes us heirs of the world.
3. ***4:18-25*** – Justification by Faith should grant us ***personal stability and lasting satisfaction*** because it enables us to fulfill the purpose for which we were designed – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever!

Getting our Bearings: Romans 4:18-25

In this section of Romans, Paul makes very clear that justification – God declaring us righteous in His sight – is not obtained through human effort, good behavior, or religious association. (3:21-26)

The only way to obtain the righteousness that justifies is through a living faith that pleases God – ***the kind of living faith Abraham had, which led to his justification before God (4:1-17).***

Which brings up three questions:

What kind of faith pleases God and justifies us?

- This is how the writer of Hebrews defines this kind of faith: *A faith that justifies is personally confident and fully convinced of the truthfulness of God's promises before they are fulfilled.* (Heb. 1:1-2)
- This is how James describes this kind of faith: *A faith that justifies is a living faith that is wholehearted, single-focused, and fully trusting in God and in His Word.* (James 2:14-26)

What does this kind of living faith demand?

- Hebrews says that this kind of faith demands that *we believe God is and that He is the rewarder of those who seek Him.* (Heb. 11:6)
- Paul said that those who would have this kind of faith *must believe in God and in His ability to give life to the dead and to call into existence the things that do not (yet) exist!* (Romans 4:17)

What does it look like, and how is it strengthened in our lives?

- Put differently, what kind of faith saves us from our sin, pleases God, and enables us to fulfill our chief end—to glorify God and enjoy Him forever?
- Paul answers this question by pointing us to Abraham and showing us his faith as an example to follow.
- In fact, earlier in the chapter, Paul actually challenges us to “*walk in the footsteps of Abraham's faith*” (4:12).

And to help us do this, Paul describes justifying faith (like Abraham's) as ***enduring hope, rooted in unwavering belief, which brings great glory to God and saves His People.***

These **four parts of this description of Abraham's faith** must be true of our own if we are to fulfill the purpose for which we were created and placed on this planet – to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

Abraham's faith (and ours) was displayed through . . .

I. Enduring Hope (vv. 18-19)

In hope he believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, "So shall your offspring be."¹⁹ He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah's womb.

A. The nature of Abraham's faith – "In hope he believed"

B. The content of Abraham's faith – "that he would be the father of many nations"

C. The context of Abraham's faith – "against hope . . . his faith did not weaken"

- Despite Divine Delay
- Despite Impossible Human Realities

D. The ground of Abraham's faith – "as he had been told"

II. Rooted in Unwavering Belief (vv. 20-21)

No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,²¹ fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised.

A. He did not allow unbelief to affect his faith

B. He allowed God to strengthen his faith over time

- God strengthened Abraham's faith by testing it through trials that built strength into his faith, trial by trial!
- And in every instance, year after year, obedience after obedience, despite sinful failures, Abraham's faith was strengthened by God because Abraham consistently responded the same way to God –

he gave God glory by trusting and obeying, no matter how long or how difficult the trial.

- None of these tests or trials were meant to destroy Abraham's faith, but to strengthen it!

III. That Brings God Great Glory (vv. 21). [For the Fame of His Name]

but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God,

- How does faith glorify God?

A. Abraham glorified God's faithfulness to His Word by trusting Him to keep His Word and fulfill His Promise!

B. Abraham's growing faith resulted in greater displays of God's glory because it eliminated human possibility!

IV. And Saves His People So They Enjoy Him Forever (vv. 22-25)

That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness."²³ But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone,²⁴ but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

A. The Immense Reward of this Kind of Faith (v. 22)

That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness.

B. The Intended Recipients for this Reward (v. 23-24a)

But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone,²⁴ but for ours also.

C. The Immense Promise made to all who believe (v. 24b-25)

It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord,²⁵ who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.

D. The Immense Generosity implied by this Reward (Rom 8:31-32)

What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?³² He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?

Conclusion: Will we walk by Faith or Will we walk by Sight?

- Abraham - lived for a reality God promised that He could not see with earthly eyes – a kingdom and a city that God promised to establish.
- Lot - settled for trinkets of earthly treasure and worldly pleasure that he could see, feel, and experience now in the cities of this world.
- When we look back 4000 years later, who got the better end?
- Who brought God the greatest glory?
- Abraham - walked by faith and received the blessing when God glorified Himself through His faithful goodness
- Lot - walked (lived) by sight and lost all when God glorified Himself in His fierce judgment.
- What will you choose to do with God's promises to you?